

THE RIGHT CYMBAL FOR THE RIGHT JOB

By Robert Saydlowski Jr.

Every drummer needs cymbals (well, everybody except those little drummers in a box that almost every single or duo act in the world are using!). There are all kinds of cymbals on the market now: Avedis Zildjian, K. Zildjian, Paiste 2002, Paiste 602, Camber and zillions of cheapo-cheapo pieces of metal whose makers supposedly call "Cymbals". But, how do you pick them out??

When you first walk into a music store, you should prepare yourself with the following information: what type of cymbal do I need? What weight of cymbal do I need? What size do I need? What type of sound do I want? What type of group will I be using the cymbal in? Hardly ever has a drummer's life been easy, and the huge variety of cymbals available makes things even more complicated. There are ride cymbals, crash cymbals, crash/ride cymbals, ping ride, dark ride, flat ride, mini-cup, rock, splash, sizzle, pang, swish, New Beat hi-hats, SoundEdge hi-hats, flange hi-hats . . . All in usable diameters from six to twenty-six inches and ranging from paper-thin weight up to heavy weight.

If you're into ear-splitting rock and roll, small cymbals should be avoided because they won't cut through the band and will crack easily due to the excessive strain they are put through. The "Rock" line of cymbals is more logical because the weight is slightly heavier than normal and they have



explosive power on stage. The Rock Ride cymbals have an extra-large bell, while on the opposite end, Mini-Cups have very small bells. Mini-cup cymbals are useful in small groups and recording situations where a "tight" sound is needed. The ride cymbal has almost no build-up in overtones and yields a positive stick sound as do heavy rides, ping ride, and the new Flat Ride which has no bell at all. *Idea:* If you have a flat ride cymbal, but still a bell for latin ride rhythms, consider purchasing Latin Percussion's new 6" Icebell and set it on top of the flat ride. A long mounting post would be needed for this.

In special-effects cymbals, "Splash" cymbals are six to twelve inches in diameter, high-pitched and are choked off very quickly. "Sizzle" cymbals are actually ride or crash/ride cymbals with rivets installed for a buzzing effect. The next two really have to be heard to be fully understood — the "Pang" which gives, naturally, a "pangy" sound, and the "Swish" or "China Type", which are

also known in the business as "garbage can covers". This type of cymbal has turned up edges and gives somewhat of an exotic Far Eastern effect. They are also sometimes used upside down for a different effect.

When choosing hi-hat cymbals, you should have the dealer get you a hi-hat stand that is similar to yours or better. It must have a tilter for the bottom cymbal which should be set at a slight angle. The top cymbal should not be too tight on the clutch and adjusted so that it's about an inch from the bottom cymbal. Try 14", 15", and 13" (in that order) with the type of stick you regularly use and also with the foot pedal to hear the "chip" sound. Whenever setting cymbals on a stand, keep them fairly loose so they can vibrate freely. When picking out ride cymbals, try a 20" first, then an 18" and then a 22" using your favorite stick again. A good crash cymbal size is 16" to 20". When testing, hit the cymbal with the shank of the stick for a solid crash. One thing to keep in mind when testing Zildjian cymbals is that they all sound different; even if the weight and type are the same. It's best to set up about three or four of the same weight and type and just go down the line until you find one that strikes your fancy. On the other hand, Paiste cymbals are pretty uniform. An 18" crash in one store will sound the same as the 18" crash next door. Paiste 2002 are usually brighter sounding than Zildjians and seem to be more durable. They are primarily designed for use in today's amplified music. Paiste is also known for their "prototype" cymbals.

These experimental cymbals can yield almost any sound you want. Paiste is always open to new ideas and are constantly turning out new types of cymbals. Newest to their line is the 8" bell cymbal and a heavy ping ride. Many people think Paiste is a lot more expensive than Zildjian because their cymbals are still made in Switzerland (Zildjian is made in the U.S.A.). Actually, with the exception of their SoundEdge hi-hats, Paiste is about ten dollars more than Zildjian, but they sound a bit different than Zildjians. It's up to the ear.

By the way, cymbals are not guaranteed against breakage, but both Zildjian and Paiste will gladly inspect all cracked or broken cymbals and make adjustments if the breakage is due to a manufacturing flaw or defect and not due to misuse.

It may all seem confusing, but aren't we drummers lucky to have such an assortment of cymbals, sticks, heads, and pedals instead of those unlucky guitarists with their three weights of picks???!!!! (Oh, sure . . .)

For more information on cymbals, you can write to:

Avedis Zildjian Company
P.O. Box 198
Accord, Massachusetts 02018

Paiste Cymbals
c/o Rogers Drums
1300 E. Valencia Drive
Fullerton, California 92631

Paiste Drummer Service
CH-6207
Nottwil, Switzerland